Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

PAGE 01 CAIRO 20501 091557Z
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S E C R E T CAIRO 20501

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 20501

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

CHEROKEE

BRUSSELS FOR USDEL SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, EG, US
SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRESIDENT SADAT

SUMMARY: THINKING OUT LOUD, SADAT WISHES SHARE WITH
PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY HIS IDEAS ON FOLLOW-UP
STEPS. LEVEL OF CAIRO CONFERENCE TOO LOW TO ALLOW
DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN. IN CONTEXT HIS RESPONSIBILITY
TO ARAB SUMMIT TO OBTAIN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM
TERRITORY SEIZED IN 1967 AND TO RESOLVE PALESTINIAN
PROBLEM, HE BELIEVES NEXT STEP HAS TO BE FOR BEGIN
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TO RESPOND TO SADAT'S JERUSALEM TRIP INITIATIVE.
AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE SHOULD CONSIST OF ISRAELI
PUBLIC DECLARATION EXPRESSING WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE
TO WITHDRAW AND READINESS RESOLVE PALESTINIAN QUESTION
IN ALL ASPECTS. SUCH A DECLARATION WOULD HAVE POSITIVE
REPERCUSSIONS THROUGHOUT WORLD AND FORCE SYRIANS AND
PALESTINIANS TO RESPOND POSITIVELY BY ENTERING INTO
DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAELIS RE DETAILS OR REJECTING
OFFER, WHICH WOULD LEAVE OTHERS FREE TO ACT AS THEY
WISH. RE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, SADAT SUGGESTED ISRAELIS

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TURN OVER WEST BANK AND GAZA TO UN FOR FIVE YEARS, AFTER WHICH SELF-DETERMINATION MIGHT TAKE PLACE. ISRAELIS WOULD FIND THAT EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE FOR THE BETTER DURING THOSE FIVE YEARS. IF BEGIN AGREED TO SUCH DECLARATION, SADAT SUGGESTED SEVERAL FORA IN WHICH ANNOUNCEMENT COULD BE MADE FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT PURPOSES (PARA 8). HE ASKED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER SEND SUBSTANCE OF SADAT'S IDEAS TO BEGIN IN WHATEVER MANNER THE PRESIDENT CONSIDERS MOST EFFECTIVE AND HOPES PRESIDENT CARTER WILL SUPPORT THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. VP MUBARAK TELEPHONED NOON TODAY TO ASK THAT I COME IMMEDIATELY TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT IN GIZA. HAVE JUST COME FROM AN HOUR LONG MEETING WITH BOTH OF THEM.

2. SADAT SAID HE WISHED TO CONVEY SOME THOUGHTS TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE SECRETARY AND, THROUGH PRESIDENT CARTER, TO PRIME MINISTER BEGIN. HIS IDEAS WERE OF A GENERAL NATURE AND PRESIDENT CARTER COULD "SHAPE" THEM IN ANY WAY HE THOUGHT BEST IN FORWARDING THEM TO BEGIN. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, SADAT NOTED THAT HE HAS BEEN THINKING ABOUT HOW TO FOLLOW UP ON THE CAIRO CONFERENCE AFTER IT CONVENES. THE CONFERENCE, HE OBSERVED, WILL BE ON AN "EXPERTS" LEVEL. THIS MEANS THAT THE PARTICIPANTS

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HAVE NO POLITICAL DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO AGREE TO ANYTHING. HENCE, IT WAS DESIRABLE TO THINK ABOUT NEXT STEPS. HE WANTED TO "THINK OUT LOUD" WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE SECRETARY BEFORE THE LATTER'S ARRIVAL HERE SO THAT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS DURING THE UPCOMING MEETINGS WITH SECRETARY VANCE. HE ALSO WANTED US TO KNOW THAT HE WILL ALWAYS WISH TO KEEP US INFORMED OF ANY DIRECT CONTACTS GOE MIGHT HAVE WITH ISRAEL, POLITICAL OR MILITARY, AND WHERE NECESSARY SEEK OUR ASSISTANCE. (LATER IN TALK HE GAVE ME BRIEFING ON JUST CONCLUDED TUHAMI/DAYAN TALKS IN RABAT--SEPTEL.)

3. IN TERMS OF WHAT THE NEXT STEPS MIGHT BE, SADAT NOTED THAT HE BEARS A RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ARAB "KINGS AND PRESIDENTS" ON TWO POINTS:

- --TO OBTAIN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL TERRITORIES SEIZED IN 1967. HERE SADAT INTERJECTED THAT AT THE RABAT CONFERENCE, THE PALESTINIANS HAD IN A "SECRET" DECISION AGREED THAT THIS WAS THE EXTENT OF ARAB OBJECTIVES IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

- --TO RESOLVE THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION--HOMELAND, REFUGEES, ETC.

4. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, SADAT CONTINUED, HIS IDEA IS THAT THE NEXT STEP HAS TO BE FOR PRIME MINISTER BEGIN TO

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RESPOND TO THE INITIATIVE THE PRESIDENT HAD TAKEN IN VISITING JERUSALEM. IT IS TIME FOR THE ISRAELIS TO TAKE SOME POSITIVE DECISIONS TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM. AN APPROPRIATE ISRAELI RESPONSE, SADAT SUGGESTED, SHOULD CONSIST OF AN ISRAELI PUBLIC DECLARATION MAKING TWO POINTS:

- --A WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE RPT IN PRINCIPLE ON THE PART OF ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ARAB LANDS SEIZED IN 1967 TOGETHER WITH AN EXPRESSION OF READINESS TO

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DISCUSS WITH ALL THE PARTIES THE DETAILS.

- --A READINESS TO RESOLVE THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION IN

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ALL ITS ASPECTS.

5. SUCH A DECLARATION, SADAT CONTINUED, WOULD "FORCE THE SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS TO THEIR KNEES." THEY WOULD THEN HAVE TO RESPOND POSITIVELY AND ENTER INTO DIRECT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS ABOUT DETAILS OR THEY COULD REJECT THE OFFER, WHICH WOULD INCUR FOR THEM INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM AND LEAVE OTHERS FREE TO ACT AS THEY WISH. "THE REGIME IN SYRIA" AND THE PLO WOULD EITHER BE ELIMINATED OR HAVE TO ADOPT A NEW, MORE CONSTRUCTIVE POSTURE. THE REPERCUSSIONS OF SUCH A DECLARATION, HE THOUGHT, WOULD BE POSITIVE THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD. IT WOULD ALSO MEAN THAT HE HAD DISCHARGED HIS RESPONSIBILITY BEFORE THE ARAB "KINGS AND PRESIDENTS" AND GIVEN GOE THE NEEDED ROOM FOR MANEUVER IN ITS OWN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL. ISRAEL WOULD NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE PARTIES CONCERNED. SUCH POSITIVE STATEMENT BY ISRAEL ON PALESTINIAN QUESTION WOULD EARN FOR IT THE PLAUDITS NOT ONLY OF THE ARAB, BUT OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

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6. SADAT ALSO HAD SOME SPECIFIC THOUGHTS ON HOW THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM SHOULD BE RESOLVED. PRESIDENT CARTER SHOULD DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO SEND THESE TO BEGIN AT THIS TIME. HE HOPED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WILL BE WILLING
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TO WORK ON THE ISRAELIS TO EVACUATE THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND TURN THEM OVER TO THE UN FOR FIVE YEARS. A UNEF FORCE, INCLUDING AMERICANS, COULD BE ESTABLISHED IN THESE AREAS. THEREAFTER, AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS, SELF-DETERMINATION COULD TAKE PLACE IN THESE AREAS. IN THE FIVE YEARS, SADAT OBSERVED, ISRAELIS WILL FIND THAT THE ENTIRE SITUATION HAS CHANGED. ISRAEL WILL NOT BE IN A DANGEROUS POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE PLO, WHOSE LEADERSHIP WILL DISAPPEAR OR CHANGE. HUSSEIN COULD ALSO "START HIS PROCESS" DURING THAT PERIOD. THE PLO WILL BE GIVEN NO OPPORTUNITY TO INTERVENE EXCEPT WHEN IT CHOOSES TO ACT RESPONSIBLY.

7. IF THE ISRAELIS AGREED TO THE TWO POINTS THAT HE HAD PROPOSED (PARA 4 ABOVE), HE, SADAT, WOULD BE WILLING TO "SELL" THEM TO ALL THE ARAB WORLD. HE WOULD THEN INFORM THE ARAB STATES OFFICIALLY ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN WORKED OUT WITH THE ISRAELIS AND EXHORT EVERY ARAB PARTY TO FACE UP TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES BY WORKING OUT DETAILS.

8. IF PRIMIN BEGIN ACCEPTED THIS CONCEPT, SADAT HAD SEVERAL THOUGHTS ON HOW SUCH A DECLARATION MIGHT BE MADE.

- --IT COULD BE ANNOUNCED AT THE CAIRO PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE LOW LEVEL OF THE CONFERENCE, HE DID NOT THINK THIS WAS FEASIBLE.

- --BEGIN, IF HE WISHED TO DO SO, COULD ANNOUNCE IT IN JERUSALEM.

- --ALTERNATIVELY, BEGIN COULD COME TO EGYPT OFFICIALLY HIS DECISION BEFORE THE EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT. THIS WOULD GIVE FULL CREDIT TO BEGIN.
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- --STILL ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE, BEGIN COULD COME TO THE CAIRO CONFERENCE, AND THEREBY ELEVATE IT TO THE HEADS OF STATE LEVEL. HE, SADAT, WOULD IN THAT CASE ATTEND AND HE WOULD HOPE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD ALSO BE WILLING TO DO SO.

9. SUCH A POSITIVE DECISION BY BEGIN, THE PRESIDENT WENT ON, WOULD BE A POLITICAL COUP AGAINST THE SOVIETS. THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, BE EXCLUDED SINCE THE

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ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS WOULD SIMPLY BE SAYING THEY HAVE AGREED UPON THESE PRINCIPLES AS PART OF PREPARATIONS FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE. ON HIS PART, SADAT SAID, HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NATURE OF PEACE, SUCH AS OFFICIALLY RECEIVING DAYAN AND/OR WEIZMAN IN "DAYLIGHT" IN CAIRO. THE DETAILS COULD BE WORKED OUT IN SUCH MEETINGS.

10. BEGIN, SADAT OPINED, WILL LOSE NOTHING BY SUCH A DECLARATION. HE WILL STILL BE DISCUSSING THE DETAILS DIRECTLY WITH EVERY PARTY OR, IF ANY OF THE PARTIES REFUSE, WILL BE UNDER NO MORE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO DO SO. DURING THE FIVE YEARS THAT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA ARE UNDER THE UN, EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE, HE WAS SURE FOR THE BETTER.

11. SADAT CONCLUDED BY SAYING, "I THINK AFTER WHAT HAS HAPPENED, I HAVE PROVEN MYSELF TO KNOW THE DYNAMICS OF THE AREA. I AM ARRIVING AT A SOLUTION TO THE WHOLE PROBLEM AND WANT PRESIDENT CARTER TO HAVE THE CREDIT FOR IT."

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12. COMMENT: FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR RECENT TALKS, SADAT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CAIRO PREPARATORY CONFERENCE, AT ITS PRESENT LEVEL, IS NOT LIKELY TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING. HENCE, HIS IDEAS ABOUT SOME MORE DRAMATIC STEP, ARRANGED THROUGH US, WHICH COULD MOVE THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD IN A TANGIBLE MANNER. HE IS ANXIOUS TO HAVE PRESIDENT CARTER'S REACTION ASAP AND WILL WANT TO DISCUSS IT WITH SECRETARY VANCE DURING THE LATTER'S UPCOMING TRIP. HE HOPES PRESIDENT CARTER WILL NOT ONLY SUPPORT HIS CONCEPT, BUT ALSO URGE BEGIN TO ACCEPT IT. EILTS

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